

## **Useful Terms**

**Applicable and Relevant and Appropriate Requirements (ARARs)** are used to determine cleanup standards that are based on the most protective standards set by law. In some cases, State, Tribal, and/or Federal cleanup standards are not the same. If this is the case, ARARs are used to make sure that EPA is using the most protective standards that apply to a particular site.

**Monitored Natural Recovery (MNR)** is used when contaminants can be broken down or contained to safe levels by letting nature take its course. This approach is generally considered when the levels of contamination are relatively low, and when there is clear scientific evidence that natural recovery will occur. Ongoing monitoring is required to ensure that natural recovery is happening as predicted.

**Enhanced Monitored Natural Recovery (EMNR)** uses a variety of methods to speed up the process of natural recovery. For example, placing thin layers of clean soil on top of contamination can encourage plants to grow, thereby reducing the spread of contamination from erosion. In addition, some plants can actually remove contaminants from the soil.

**Surface Weighted Average Concentration (SWAC)** is the average level of a specific contaminant concentration throughout a river stretch or given area of a site. Because it is an average, it may include areas of little or no contamination as well as “hot spots” where contamination is high. The SWAC is usually expressed as a number of parts per million or billion.

**The Record of Decision (ROD)** is a public document that explains which cleanup alternatives will be used to clean up a Superfund site. It is the final EPA approved cleanup plan for a site. The ROD is written and reviewed by EPA and draws on the Remedial Investigation, the Feasibility Study, EPA’s Proposed Plan, public comment, legal requirements and other sources. It describes the specific cleanup objectives and approaches required for the site.

**Remedial Action Objectives (RAOs)** identify each of the contaminants of concern at a site, the specific areas where each contaminant poses a risk to people or the environment, and the cleanup level appropriate for each contaminant based on protection of human health and the environment.

**Remedial Action Levels (RALs) and Preliminary Remediation Goals (PRGs)** define the goals of the cleanup. On a general level, they include statements such as:

- Achieve surface water quality criteria to the extent practicable;
- Protect humans who consume aquatic organisms (i.e., remove consumption advisories);
- Protect ecological receptors (i.e., healthy invertebrate, bird, fish, mammal populations);
- Minimize contaminant releases during remediation.

With these general goals in mind, specific numeric concentration goals are established for contaminants at the site in order to meet the stated objectives.

**Additional Superfund information:** [www.epa.gov/superfund/community/process.htm#rifs](http://www.epa.gov/superfund/community/process.htm#rifs)